

(b) if so, whether the betel farmers are not getting the benefit of the crop insurance scheme as the cultivation of betel has not been accorded the status of agriculture;

(c) whether lakhs of people of the State are leading pitiable life as a result thereof;

(d) whether betel cultivation has also not been included in the activities of agriculture science centre situated in those district of the State where betel cultivation is undertaken on a large scale; and

(e) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) There is no statistics available on the number of people dependent on the betel cultivation in Bihar. However, it is cultivated in 25 districts of the State.

(b) Betelvine is a horticultural crop do not have the adequate yield data and regular system for yield assessment due to multi picking nature of its yield. Hence it could not be covered under the existing Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Under the all India Coordinated Research Project on Betelvine of ICAR, a Research Centre on Betelvine is located at Rajendra Agriculture University, Pusa. The Centre is catering to the needs of betelvine growers of State. During VIII Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs. 20.92 lakh was sanctioned to the Research Centre.

[English]

Inadequate Stock at Ration Shops

2508. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Inadequate stock at ration shops despite assurances" appearing in the Statesman, dated January 12, 1997;

(b) whether the Government are aware that PDS throughout the country has been crippled and stocks at the fare price shops are inadequate;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to make changes in their policy and also issue guidelines to the State Governments in the matter;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) Public Distribution System is implemented under the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments/UT Administrations. Operational aspects of PDS such as allocations, availability at fair price shops level, etc. vest entirely with the State Governments/UT Administrations. Delhi Government have lifted their allocated quota of foodgrains under PDS as well as under open sale of wheat as indicated below :

(In 000 Tons)

	Allocation		Off-take	
	P.D.S.	Open Sale	P.D.S.	Open Sale
Oct. '96	60.00	15.00	48.80	13.92
Nov. '96	60.00	20.00	37.30	16.51
Dec. '96	60.00	36.00	72.40	15.81
Jan. '97	60.00	36.00	76.20	10.43

(d) to (f) The Hon'ble Prime Minister has made a Statement in the Lok Sabha on 24.2.1997 on introduction of Targeted Public Distribution System and copies of the detailed guidelines containing information on various aspects of TPDS in this regard have also been laid on the table of the House.

Transport Charges on Levy Sugar

2509. SHRI GORDHANBHAI JAVIA :
SHRI N.J. RATHWA :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Food and Civil Supplies Department of Gujarat has sent any proposals regarding "Regrant of transport charges as per road milage in lieu of railway freight of levy sugar in Gujarat" to the Union Government during the last three years and till date;

(b) if so, the details of approved proposals, year-wise;

(c) the number of proposals under consideration along with the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which these proposals are likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (d) Till 11.4.1996 the transportation charges were reimburseable either on the basis of (a) actual railway freight or (b) actual transportation charges by road at the rate approved by the State Government limited to the rate of transportation charges approved by the FCI for transporting foodgrains in that State. Where the FCI's rates are not available, the State Governments

rates be allowed limited to the actual railway freight. Where FCI's rates and rail-head is not there, State Government rates may be allowed.

Government received a series of representations from different State Governments including from Government of Gujarat to allow reimbursement of the actual minimum cost of transport. Considering their problems, it was decided to revise the guidelines for transportation charges w.e.f. 1.4.1996.

Under the new guidelines, the transportation charges are payable on a flat rate for each State to be fixed on the basis of audited figures of expenditure for previous years.

[Translation]

Import of Life Saving Drugs

2510. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) the total value of life saving drugs imported during 1994-96;

(b) the steps taken by the Government to produce these drugs in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) :
(a) The value of bulk drugs and formulations imported during 1994-96 is as under :

	(Rs. in crore)	
	1994-95	1995-96
Bulk Drugs	811.43	903.93
Formulations	173.02	191.09

(b) In order to encourage the production of drugs/end products in the country the Government have done away with Industrial Licensing except in a few cases, foreign investment upto 51% and foreign technology agreements are given automatic approvals. Encouragement to R & D and simplification of pricing system are other steps taken by the Government to boost production in the country.

Indian Peoples' Famine Trust

2511. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Peoples' Famine Trust is being Administered by the Government;

(b) if so, the objectives and terms of reference of the Trust;

(c) whether any assistance has been provide to the famine affected regions of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh

and other parts of the country by the Trust during 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The Ministry of Agriculture is administering the Indian Peoples' Natural Calamities Trust (IPNCT)' which was formerly known as the Indian Peoples' Famine Trust.

(b) The objectives of the Trust, which is Administered by a Board of Management headed by Agriculture Minister are the following :

- (i) providing assistance to victims of natural calamities such as flood, cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, avalanche and hailstrom or any other like calamity, who do not receive any financial assistance from other sources;
- (ii) promoting research, study and documentation activities for natural disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and reduction.

(c) and (d) During 1996-97 Rs. 6.00 lakh and Rs. 1.65 lakh were provided to Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala from the Trust for assisting some of the flood victims. No such assistance was provided to States affected by droughts.

(e) Institutional arrangements already exist for providing financial assistance to States for carrying out relief and rehabilitation meassures in the wake of natural calamities including drought. A Calamity Relief Fund with an average annual allocation of Rs. 1260.00 crores and a National Fund for Calamity Relief with an average annual allocation of Rs. 140.00 crores have been constituted for this purpose. The annual income of the IPNCT is too meagre to provide any worthwhile assistance to the victims of the natural calamities.

Forestry Project

2512. DR. M. JAGANNATH : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has reviewed the Forestry Project of Andhra Pradesh recently;

(b) if so, the observations and suggestions made by them in this regard;

(c) the amount spent on the project during the first two and third year by the State;

(d) the time by which the remaining amount is likely to be spent; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure completion of the project within the stipulated time?